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REMARKS

The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the subject application. Applicants request reconsideration of the subject application based on the following remarks.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, and 18 have been amended and 3, 5, 14, 17, 19, and 20 have been cancelled by the instant amendment. The cancellation of claims 17, 19, and 20 and the amendments to claims 5, 15, and 18, in part, reflect the amendments made by Article 34 amendment during the international stage of PCT/JP00/05582. Support for the amendments to the claims can be found in the claims as originally filed and in the specification. No new matter has been introduced by the instant amendments.

A copy of the original Article 34 amendment and English language translation thereof, which were filed with the §371 application package, are enclosed for the examiner's consideration.

In response to the Restriction Requirement, Applicant elects Group II, drawn to claims 6-12 and 20.

The present election is made solely to comply with the Office Action and should not be construed as a surrender of any subject matter of the application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue non-elected and/or cancelled subject matter in this or a subsequent application.

Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of Group I. Claims 1-5 and 15, 16, and 18, as amended, provide methods of proliferating a hepatitis C virus which is substantially similar to the methods of Group II, e.g., methods in which a liquid culture medium flows from one side of the culture vessel toward the other side. Thus, claims 1, 6, 7, 10, and 15 provide methods of proliferating a hepatitis C virus in which the flow of the liquid culture medium is from the

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periphery to the center or from one side of the vessel to the other side (e.g., top to bottom or the like). Thus, Groups I and II should be combined at this time.

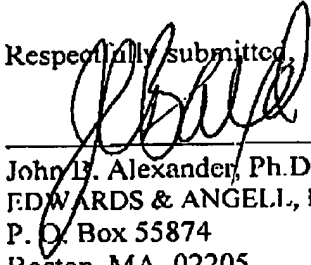
Upon allowance of the method of proliferating a hepatitis C virus, Applicants request rejoinder of the claims to the culture apparatus which are used in the method claims of the application. The method claims, as amended, provide methods of proliferating a hepatitis C virus, which methods are not recited in any of the art of record in the instant application. Thus, each of the claims, as amended, is directed to a the single general inventive concept and the claims thus possess unity of invention.

Early consideration of the application and claims as amended is earnestly solicited.

Although it is not believed that any additional fees are needed to consider this submission, the Examiner is hereby authorized to charge our deposit account no. 04-1105 should any fee be deemed necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

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